

July 20, 1989

To: Peter Ruess
From: John Dixon

You requested advice on the FOI request about Afghanistan from Steven Galster. (He gave his home address. He's associated with the National Security Archive.)

1. Afghan materials from the "Office of the Director of Private Sector Committees." This is Louise Wheeler's office. I have had only one contact with that office. We assisted Variety Children's Lifeline of Variety Clubs International in setting up a relationship with the Interagency Committee on Migration to bring severely wounded Afghan children to America for treatment. We also assisted the President and Ms. Reagan make a video tape of their concern about war wounded Afghan children to be shown at the annual fund raising dinner of Variety Clubs International at the Waldorf Astoria. These events took place in 1987 or 88.

2. International Visitor Grants for Afghans were rare in the early 1980's. A few Afghan refugees may have come in the Pakistan program during that period. The Afghanistan program resumed in 1987. Since then probably 50 Afghans have come to the states under the regular part of this program. In addition, in both 1987 and 1988, the Voluntary Visitor Program assisted the visit of top level Afghan Resistance leaders to Washington. Probably 20 grantees were involved in these visits.

3. Galster also requests memoranda and reports produced for and by the Interagency Working Group on Afghanistan Strategy relating to US government efforts to maximize media coverage of the Afghan war and publicity for the Resistance. This committee met fortnightly throughout 1987 and up until May 1988. First of all, it should be pointed out that this was a State Department Meeting, chaired by a State Department officer, and held in the State Department. The Department (NEA/PAB) prepared the brief written agenda and minutes of the prior meeting (many of which I have discarded.) Galster's request, therefore should probably start in the Department rather than with us. I started attending the meetings in May 1987 and was a fairly faithful attendee until they were discontinued. Most of the reports of, from, for and by the meeting were oral. A search obviously will have to be made of our NEA files and those of P/G and VOA to see if my memory is correct. Something might turn up. I don't remember ever writing a report for that purpose. Galster mentions in his request that he is especially interested in "Public Themes on Afghanistan". As I recall, these were cables

drafted by the Department to send to all posts abroad. We (P/G) then turned them into talking points for our PAO's around the world. The State cables were classified; ours, as far as I can recall, were not.

Off hand, I see nothing that would violate security or privacy in releasing any of the information mentioned above on these subjects.